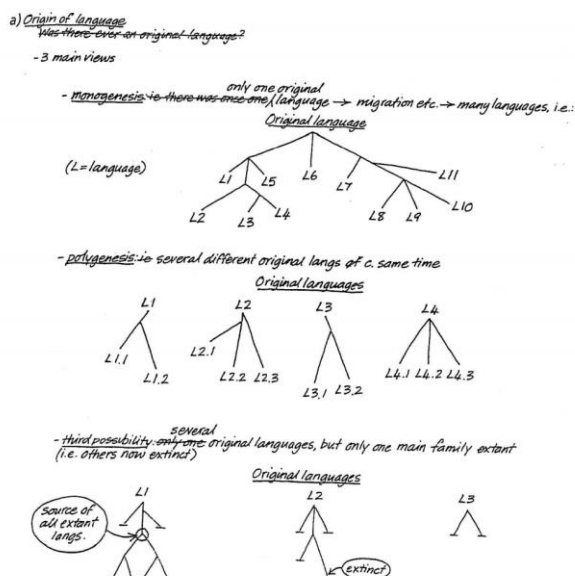
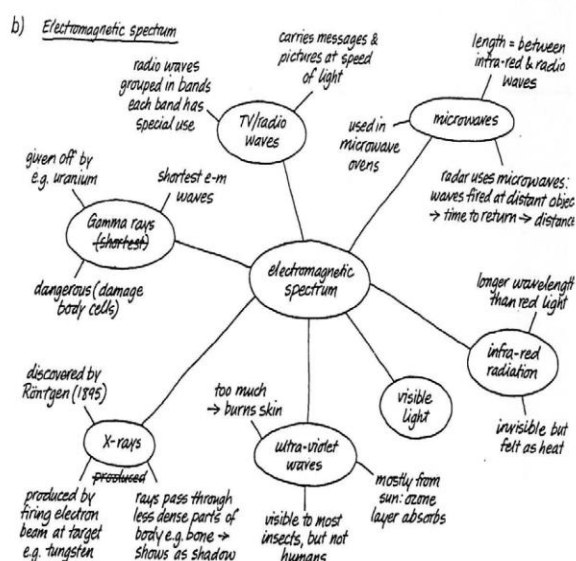


Note-Making Strategies

There are several ways to make notes from the materials you read. Regardless of which note-making strategy works for you, it is important that your notes are clear and make sense to you. You need an understanding of what the notes mean and how they are relevant to your research topic. Without this, you could end up with pages of useless notes!

Visual note-making

Visual note making is useful for brainstorming new ideas and seeing how ideas relate to each other. Visual note-making can help you organise and group different pieces of information. Visual notes are brief and designed to trigger your memory rather than show a detailed explanation of something.



Annotated Bibliographies

Annotated Bibliographies provide a concise summary, analysis and evaluation of a piece of literature. They begin with a full bibliographic citation and explore issues such as the literature's main argument, the key findings, author motivation or bias, limitations, strengths and weaknesses of the literature, and implications for your research.

Synthesis Matrix

A Synthesis Matrix allows you to compare common and contrasting ideas from different sources. Organising information like this can help you to write your thesis in a logical order that flows well.

Sample Synthesis Matrix

Article	Content	Theme	Issues
XYZ by Smith, 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Definition ■ Characteristics ■ Previous research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Children with Aspergers need a range of treatments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Expense ■ Diverse practitioners needed
ABC by Jones, 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Socialisation concerns ■ Critique of special needs units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Complexity of socialisation requires complex solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Who will manage process?
QRS by Green, 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Problems with definition acceptance ■ Probs with 'mixed bag' diagnoses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Teachers and public need more education ■ Better diagnosis – better outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cost to education and health department

Cornell Note-taking Method

The below example has been adapted from the Cornell Note-taking method, primarily used for note-taking during lectures. This adapted version allows you to clearly organise key information from readings, with space to identify main points, finer details, and evaluate their usefulness for your thesis!

Source	Citation		
Overall Thesis	Main argument		
Page Number	Big ideas	Key Points	Details
How can I use this? How is this relevant to my research?			

Organising your notes

If you are saving your notes in folders on your computer, make sure they are clearly labelled and saved in multiple places (e.g.: the cloud or an external hard drive as well as on your computer). You could also try online note-making, storage, and citation programs such as EndNote.

Academic Learning Support offer free individual consultations and group workshops for HDR students. For more writing, study, and academic support contact learningsupport@newcastle.edu.au or call 02 4921 5350.